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ABSTRACT

Four papers are presented on learning environments, accommodating special needs students, and educational facility design and construction trends towards integration and inclusion. The first paper, "All for One: Inclusion in the Learning Environment," addresses the change from a tendency of educational facility design and construction to exclude special needs students to more inclusive and community-friendly facilities today. The second paper, "Common Ground," explores educational facility design that is now responding to the evolving curriculum of interdisciplinary, hands-on, and integrated learning. The third paper, "E Pluribus Unum: The New American Community School," explores the emerging trend towards integration and inclusion in educational facility design. The fourth paper, "The Lincoln Plan," examines the designing of educational facilities as thematic learning centers, each with an integrated curriculum covering all of the necessary core content and with its own interdisciplinary team for implementation. (GR)

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Steven Bingler

Concordia Papers

All For One

Common Ground

E Pluribus Unum

The Lincoln Plan

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ALL FOR ONE: INCLUSION IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Steven Bingler

When we speak of inclusion in the contemporary learning environment we generally refer to the incorporation of students with special needs. Inclusion in this context is a caring behavior that respects a desire for all students to be a part of the same educational family. But this caring behavior can also be seen as an example of the kind of thinking that has been missing in the design of all learning environments and a harbinger of the development of a new and powerfully integrative design ethic.

Much of the twentieth century has been characterized by a powerful tendency towards diffusion and disintegration. This phenomenon has manifested itself in a number of ways. The design and construction of buildings, a practice that was once accomplished by a master builder and a collaborative team of talented journeymen, now involves legions of architects, engineers, general contractors, construction managers, electricians, plumbers, mechanics, and attorneys, along with a host of support agencies and institutions. The manufacturing of automobiles, which was once handled by teams of generalists in the fields of procurement, machining and assembly, has grown over the past 50 years to include over 2,000 independent disciplines. In less than a century, the medical profession has grown to include more than 35 primary specialties. In education, the delivery of knowledge has spread out to include multiple specialists in all core subjects as well as fields like early childhood, special education, art, athletics, vocational education, assessment, governance, counseling, administration and transportation. Although it is difficult to argue with the benefits that derive from the ability to focus on one's field of endeavor and responsibility, it is also important to recognize the need to keep track of the forest as well as the trees.

One example of our inability to see the whole picture can be illustrated by our lack of foresight in dealing with the special needs of people who are physically challenged. In 1990 the U.S. Congress passed the Americans With Disabilities Act that mandated the design of new public buildings to accommodate access to major public spaces by the physically impaired. In 1990 this revolutionary new act was expanded to provide access to every part of new and renovated buildings. The outcome of this mandate has been a significant change in the way architects and contractors think about design. One way of looking at these changes would be to compliment our legislators for their concern. Another would be to question why it takes an act of Congress to convince developers and designers to exercise the kind of caring behavior that they should have been engaged in all along. Hindsight makes me wonder what we must have been thinking about during those years when disabled people were excluded from our buildings because they couldn't negotiate stairs in a wheelchair.

The structure of the physical environments that support learning have also followed an exclusive path. In most cases, the school site is isolated from its community by

a fence that encloses large quantities of students on single sites. The current standard for the size of a high school is 30 acres plus one additional acre for every 100 students. For a high school of two thousand students this means a site of over 50 acres. Sites of this magnitude can be found only in rural areas or on the fringe of most urban regions. This usually results in schools that are disconnected from the center of their communities.

The place of the school is defined by its architectural image and iconography. Over 43 percent of all existing school buildings were built in the 1950's and 60's. Their architectural expressions are in keeping with a late modern interpretation of the "International Style," which originated in Germany in the 1920's and was based on the aesthetics of factories and ocean liners. The image and aesthetics of late modern school structures were further influenced by cost limitations and the need for rapid construction caused by the Baby Boom. The designs were developed in collaboration with manufacturers and suppliers of building systems resulting in a system of prefabricated, mass produced modular building components designed to expedite both the design and construction process. Included in the "kit of parts" were everything from aluminum windows, asbestos tile flooring and other technological innovations like the 2 foot by 4 foot suspended lay-in ceiling. The acoustical lay-in ceiling has since expanded to become the system of choice for almost all commercial and institutional buildings. The comments heard most often about educational facilities are that they are cold and institutional rather than warm, welcoming or inspirational. Most people seem to think they look like prisons. With only a few carefully crafted exceptions, the esoteric and exclusive architectural aesthetic of industrialism has created an image for education that excludes the kind of character and personality that we associate with other aspects of a nurturing and caring learning environment.

Perhaps the most memorable design innovation of this period, both philosophically and practically, was the "open plan" school. One of the key components of this unique design caused the elimination of most walls separating individual classrooms. The result was a reduction in the cost of wall construction and the expensive ductwork required to distribute air to individual classroom spaces. Although succeeding in its cost reduction goals, the "open plan" school's failure to recognize and accommodate contemporary instructional practices resulted in many educators loss of trust in research and innovation for the physical learning environment.

All of these factors influencing the design of educational facilities have been exclusionary. By isolating learning on single large school sites and designing them to conform to an impersonal industrial aesthetic we have contributed to the segregation of the school from its support community. Even worse, excluding any significant or sustained input of teachers, students, parents and community representatives from the design and planning process has contributed to the development of a whole generation of facilities that, in many cases, have failed to meet their functional criteria both as educational institutions and as inclusive community neighborhood gathering places.

Over the past two decades the trend toward exclusion has begun to change. A new ethic of inclusion, integration and interdependence has begun to emerge throughout the educational system. Many School Boards have opened up their decision making process to larger groups of stakeholders. One result of these collaborations is an encouraging trend toward a greater shared use of educational facilities by local communities. Recent research indicating the broad benefits of small neighborhood schools has also begun to have an impact. In the development of its plans for the Metropolitan Center in Providence

Rhode Island, The Big Picture Company, an affiliate of the Annenberg Institute, has developed a plan that includes 12 small schools of 50 to 100 students each. Each of these small schools will be integrated into the adjoining neighborhood. The small schools will share a central commons where all 900 students will convene. The project has been developed through a collaborative process in concert with neighborhood stakeholders. Throughout their learning careers, Met Center students will spend a significant amount of their time venturing further out into the Providence community through an intern program involving local businesses. This additional layer of interaction, which will be centered around the core curriculum, will further diminish the distinctions between learning and living.

In Dearborn, Michigan a partnership of the Ford Motor Company, the Henry Ford Museum and the Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency has produced a charter high school located in the Henry Ford Museum. This innovative integration of the museum with a formal 9-12 grade educational institution will provide students with access to a half million artifacts of manufacturing arts and sciences and mentorships with some of the most experienced museum curators in the nation. The main museum building, with over 12 acres of exhibit space, will house the ninth grade class. The academy's physical environment also encompasses the 80 acre "Greenfield Village," a collection of nearly 100 historic buildings purchased, dismantled and reconstructed in Dearborn by Henry Ford. Included in the collection are the Wright Brother's bicycle shop, Thomas Edison's Menlo Park laboratory, where the inventor created the light bulb and the homes of Stephen Foster, Noah Webster and other noteworthy inventors and creators. Because the facility will be constructed within the existing museum structure, the Henry Ford Academy will offer its exceptional learning programs at a significant reduction in the capital and operating costs that would be required for a new facility.

These examples of integration and shared efficiency point the way to a new and more sensible approach to learning. Underlying these models is the continually emerging shift toward a more systemic and integrated pedagogy involving programs like team teaching, integrated and thematic curriculum, cooperative learning, multiple-intelligences and other inclusive educational change agents. The Zen-like dualism of inclusion demands that we develop a structure for accommodating diversity without separation. The various agents of the change process must eventually reach out and embrace the diverse parts that will then circumscribe and nurture its wholeness.

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COMMON GROUND

Steven Bingler

Much of the twentieth century has been characterized by a forceful tendency towards disintegration and diffusion. The design and construction of buildings, a practice that was once accomplished by a master builder and a collaborative team of talented journeymen, now involves a legion of architects, engineers, general contractors, construction managers, electricians, plumbers, mechanics and attorneys, along with a host of support agencies and institutions. The manufacturing of automobiles which was once handled by teams of generalists in the fields of procurement, machining and assembling has grown over the past fifty years to encompass more than two thousand independent disciplines. In less than a century, the medical profession has expanded to more than thirty-five primary specialties and hundreds of sub- specialties. In education the delivery of knowledge, which was once conducted in one room schools with an educator generalist now includes multiple specialists in all core subjects as well as early childhood, special education, art, athletics, vocational education, assessment, governance, counseling, administration and transportation. Although it is difficult to argue the benefits of exploring and expanding one's field of endeavor, it is also important to recognize the need to understand how this extended kit of parts still fits together as a whole. We need to look at the forest as well as the trees.

Over the past twenty years the restructuring of education has begun to respond to the trend toward dissipation with theories and best practices that embody an ethic of inclusion and integration. Teachers are becoming more team oriented. The relationships between students are becoming more cooperative. Special needs kids are being incorporated into the mainstream and, in some ways, every student is considered to have unique learning abilities or, as Howard Gardner defines, "multiple intelligences." Curriculum is evolving towards a set of frameworks that are interdisciplinary, hands-on and integrated with the real world. This kind of integrative thinking, when combined with the powerful advances in specialization that proceeded it, presents one of the great opportunities for the advancement of education in our own time.

Some of these integrative ideas are beginning to find their way into a discourse about a total learning environment that, for once, embraces all of the factors that influence how and whether powerful learning is actually taking place. As the dialogue continues to expand its logical resting place will be in the environment on which learning has always been most dependent—the environment of the total community. Dr. Leonard Duhl, the father of the international "Healthy Cities" movement, has advocated such a focus for over thirty years. Duhl's point of view is that communities function much like a human body, where an illness in any vital organ significantly and sometimes radically affects the health and well being of the whole body system. Since education is a complex interdependent assemblage that impacts on and is impacted by all of the community's in-

dividual parts, it is here that a healthy and fully functioning system is most crucial for long term community stability and sustainability. In order to clearly visualize the potential of a totally integrated learning environment it maybe helpful to examine some examples of the concept in action.

One example is the "academical village" designed by Thomas Jefferson for the University of Virginia. Although it is a facility for higher learning, the special attributes embodied in the campus design are applicable to learning environments on every scale. Throughout the design of the facility, Mr. Jefferson manifested the philosophy of an integrated learning system. Here, every component of the environment would function to promote the institution's classical curriculum. The underlying structure was Socratic and cooperative, with the student and the professor/mentor living around a common quadrangle. There were ten pavilions that housed the professors on the second level and a meeting room or "classroom" below. Each of the pavilions was designed in a different classical architectural "order" and served as a kind of architectural laboratory for the students who lived in clusters of rooms between each pavilion, all connected by a single colonnade. Behind each pavilion was a formal garden, open to everyone, that also served as a botanical laboratory. At the four corners of the campus Mr. Jefferson's plans called for restaurants with food prepared by families from foreign countries with native decor and native languages spoken in each one. The end result was, what noted educator and environmental researcher Anne Taylor would call a "three dimensional textbook."

This concept of the learning space can be seen as a kind of multidimensional environment that is especially appropriate in the context of the integrated curriculum. Here the myriad aspects of the curriculum become added "dimensions" of the total environment. Other components might be things like the historic and contemporary social and cultural fabric of the community where even more dimensions can be added. The need to explore Mr. Jefferson's ideas of merging the architectural, cultural and educational components of the learning environment into a single integrated whole deserves more attention and exploration.

It is encouraging that such an ethic of inclusion, integration and interdependence has begun to emerge in parts of the nation's educational system. One result is a trend toward a greater shared use of educational facilities by local communities. Recent research indicating the broad benefits of small neighborhood schools have begun to have an impact on the size of educational facilities and their relationship to their neighborhood where they are located. In the development of its plans for the Metropolitan Center in Providence, Rhode Island, The Big Picture Company, an affiliate of the Annenberg Institute, has devised a plan which includes twelve small schools of fifty to one hundred students each. Each of these small schools will be integrated into the adjoining neighborhood. The small schools will share a central commons where all nine-hundred students will convene. The project has been developed through a collaborative process in concert with neighborhood stakeholders. Throughout their learning careers, Met Center students will spend a significant amount of their time venturing even further out into the Providence community through an intern program involving local businesses. This additional layer of interaction, which will be centered around the core curriculum, will further diminish the distinctions between learning and living.

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million artifacts of manufacturing arts and sciences and mentorships with some of the most experienced museum curators in the nation. The main museum building, with over twelve acres of exhibit space, will house the ninth grade class. The innovative learning environment also encompasses the eighty acre "Greenfield Village," that holds a collection of nearly one-hundred historic buildings purchased and reconstructed in Dearborn by Henry Ford. Included in the collection are the Wright Brothers' Bicycle Shop, Thomas Edison's Menlo Park laboratory (where the inventor created the light bulb) and the homes of Stephen Foster, Noah Webster and other noteworthy inventors and creators. Because the facility will be constructed within the existing museum structure the Henry Ford Academy will be able to offer its exceptional learning programs at a significant reduction in the capital and operating costs that would normally be required for a new facility.

These examples of integration and shared efficiency point the way to a new and more sensible approach to the development of facilities for learning. Although similar experiential learning environments have proven to be short lived in earlier times, the continually emerging concept of a more integrated pedagogy involving programs like team teaching, integrated and thematic curriculum, cooperative learning, multiple intelligences and other inclusive educational change agents could be the common ground on which a more systemic learning environment can prosper. In order for this to happen, the various agents of the change process must reach out and embrace the diverse parts that will then circumscribe and nurture their eventual wholeness. From the vast resources of information and knowledge developed through the proliferation of individual disciplines, there exists an unprecedented opportunity for a New American Community School that can foster the expansion of the collective human spirit. The community wide learning environment that supports this systemic ideal embraces the dualistic ethic of diversity and accord that lies at the heart of every healthy and creative organization.

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E PLURIBUS UNUM: The New American Community School

Steven Bingler

Much of the twentieth century has been characterized by a forceful tendency towards disintegration and diffusion. The design and construction of buildings, a practice that was once accomplished by a master builder and a collaborative team of talented journeymen, now involves a legion of architects, engineers, general contractors, construction managers, electricians, plumbers, mechanics, and attorneys, along with a host of support agencies and institutions. The manufacturing of automobiles, which was once handled by teams of generalists in the fields of procurement, machining and assembly has grown over the past 50 years to encompass more than 2000 independent disciplines. In less than a century, the medical profession has expanded to more than 59 primary specialties and numerous sub-specialties. In education, the delivery of knowledge, which was once conducted in one room schools with an educator generalist now includes multiple specialists in all core subjects as well as early childhood, special education, art, athletics, vocational education, assessment, governance, counseling, administration and transportation. Although it is difficult to argue with the benefits of exploring and expanding one's field of endeavor, it is also important to recognize the need to understand how this extended kit of parts still fits together as a whole. In order to avoid problems of coordination and communications among the vastly expanding information resources now available, a better knowledge of the operation of these more complex systems is now required. We need to look at the forest as well as the trees.

This paper explores an emerging trend towards integration and inclusion that provides the groundwork for addressing some of these concerns. Although the emphasis here is on the impact of this trend on education, it is important to note that our view of the learning environment must be expanded to include the entire community and all of its related parts. For this reason, it is not enough to think about
the design of educational environments in and of themselves, but to adopt an approach to education and educational facilities planning that is more integrated with the planning of the total urban and community environment.

Over the past twenty years, the rocky road of educational reform has evolved toward an ethic that embodies more inclusion and integration. Teachers are becoming more team oriented. The relationships between students are becoming more cooperative. Special needs kids are being incorporated into the mainstream, and in some ways, as has been identified by Howard Gardner, every student is considered to have unique "intelligences" or learning abilities. Curriculum is evolving towards a set of frameworks that are interdisciplinary, hands-on and integrated with the real world. This kind of integrative thinking, when combined with the powerful advances in specialization that proceeded it, presents one of the great opportunities for the advancement of education in our own time.

Some of these integrative ideas are beginning to find their way into a discourse about a total learning environment that, for once, embraces all of the factors that influence how and whether powerful learning is actually taking place. As the dialogue continues to expand, its logical resting place will be in the environment on which learning has always been most dependent, the environment of the total community. Dr. Leonard Duhl, the father of the international "Healthy Cities" movement, has advocated such a focus for over 30 years. Duhl's point of view is that communities function much like a human body, where an illness in any vital organ significantly and sometimes radically affects the health and well being of the whole body system. Likewise in communities a single malfunctioning part can seriously inflict or incapacitate the whole community system. Since education is a complex interdependent assemblage that impacts on, and is impacted by all of the community's individual parts, it is here that a healthy and fully functioning system is most critical for long term community stability and sustainability. In order to explore this integrated community framework better, it is helpful to consolidate some of its myriad components into a manageable set of interdependent environments.

The first of these inter-dependent environments includes all of the community's physical resources. This category encompasses the total built environment, including buildings, bridges, highways and even telecommunications infrastructure. Also included is the natural environment, which encompasses parks, recreation areas and streams. The second interdependent environment encompasses all of the community's learning resources. Included in this category are Pre-K to 12, community college and university curriculum. The comprehensive community learning environment also includes all civil service training and skills development programs along with similar programs in the corporate/private sectors. The third environment defines the community's various systems of governance. Included are the organizational structure of school boards, city and county boards of supervisors and civic organizations. This category defines how and by whom decisions made on the part of the total community are developed, deliberated and implemented. The fourth environment includes the social and economic programs that impact on the individual and collective well being of the community. These include a broad range of programs related to business and commerce as well as health and human services.

These four environments comprise some of the essential elements of the total community environment. Although the wealth of individual community resources that they contain are necessary components of every community, it is the quality of their interaction that determines the community's ultimate health and well being. These interdependent connections can be visualized as a tetrahedron. Here, the four individual components of the community environment are represented by four small spheres. Each of these environmental components interact with the other three. Together, this produces a total of twelve interdependent interactions. The relationship between all of these environmental parts and the whole tetrahedron are also interdependent. Together, they describe the living culture of the community organization, which lies at the center of well being for the community as a whole.

An integrated vision, which is unique for every community, is derived from the geographic, historic, ethnic, social, economic, educational and other cultural factors that distinguish one community organization from another. Any creative process that allows for the discovery, celebration and incorporation of these diverse influences must be in tune with the heartbeat of the

community organism. In this context, our current community malaise can be seen as the product of a congenital disease that blocks the flow of living information between each of the community's vital organs. Restoring these vital communications channels takes hard work and a lot of patience. When the system is functioning to its maximum advantage, the parts depend on the whole and the whole relies on all of its parts working together harmoniously. Out of many, one.....E Pluribus Unum

A good starting point for the development of more harmonious community systems lies in the educational sector. The importance of schools to local economies has been demonstrated through the choices made by businesses and families when they analyze strategic investments or future locations. Education impacts on all aspects of life and every person in the community is at some time a participant in the educational process. It is through this shared educational experience that the community can most easily find its common ground. Achieving the collective vision, designing a plan for implementation and carrying through with a systemic plan requires careful orchestration and facilitation. Included in the process must be a broad range of community stakeholders, including students, parents, educators and representatives from business and civic organizations.

Two planning projects facilitated by Concordia Incorporated include integrated planning principles that address these goals. The first project, a plan for the Lincoln Unified School District in Stockton, California, began with the design for a new high school facility. With the help a 100 community stakeholders, the process led to the development of a restructuring plan for the district called "The Lincoln Plan". Included in the long range plan is a design for a 40 acre integrated learning center with an environmental research facility, a business/conference center and physical fitness center developed through a cooperative school-community model. A second project for the Western Placer School District in Lincoln, California developed by a similar set of stakeholders resulted in a master plan for the entire school district that encourages school-community partnerships and cooperative public/private funding for all future educational facilities.

A community-wide interdependent learning environment that is developed and sustained by its constituents is the foundation for the continued evolution of the ideals of the American Democratic vision. Combined with the vast resources of information and knowledge developed through the proliferation of individual disciplines, there exists an unprecedented opportunity for a New American Community School that can foster the ongoing expansion of the collective human spirit.

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THE LINCOLN PLAN

Steven Bingler

It has been speculated that science first led people away from generalized thinking and ushered them toward the relentless specialization of the modern world. Others trace the spread of specialization to the Industrial Revolution of the late 19th century, where tasks were divided into discrete, mechanistic departments. Health, human services, arts, and education were some of the obvious victims of this departmental logic in the public sector. It is this legacy that our cities and communities have inherited.

Contemporary planners have come to realize that specialization has its limits and drawbacks, especially when it comes to the survival of complex systems like cities and communities. Dr. Leonard Duhl, a professor of psychology and urban planning at U.C. Berkeley, advocates an image of the city that is more integrated and holistic in concept. He describes the city as an organism, where all of the parts depend on each other for survival. This has become the model for a network of over 1,000 "healthy cities" worldwide. According to Dr. Duhl, "You've got to deal with the multiplicity of life in the city rather than just one dimension."

The human quest for knowledge that drives the need for our educational systems is one of the many dimensions of the healthy community. Indeed the imperative for learning and exploration can be seen as an essential part of its soul. In his August 1992 remarks to the Association of Space Explorers, NASA administrator Dan Goldin explained the "Exploration is not simply a pastime for the curious. It's a biological imperative—wired right into our DNA. There is something intrinsic to life itself that says,'to grow is to live, to stop is to die.' Exploration is what we live for. It's how we grow as intelligent beings."

The process of altering and expanding our approach to inquiry and exploration through educational restructuring is one of our greatest hopes for developing healthier and less alienated communities. Because learning is a part of all community activities, it can serve as a nexus for community action and a platform for the revival of community values. The ideal learning community could be seen as a seamless continuum of learning and production where the pursuit of knowledge is a lifetime experience and education is inextricably married to the living and working environment.

For almost two years the Lincoln Unified School District in Stockton, California has worked at redefining the relationship between school and community. Through a process involving the participation of more than 300 students, parents, education professionals and community representatives, the district has formulated its "Lincoln Plan." Responding to student demands to "make it real," the school board, administrative staff, and consultants have energetically engaged a participatory planning process that will result in radical departures from the educational norm. The district's thirteen sites will be redesigned as thematic learning centers, each with an integrated curriculum covering all of the necessary core content. Each site will develop

its own theme and its own interdisciplinary team for implementation. A pilot project emerged recently through the impetus of a small group of education professionals. The "Pacific School" includes six thematically structured programs. Following close behind is the design of a new K-12 environmental learning center. This 40 acre learning site is being developed by a team that includes professional educators, students, environmental professionals and naturalists. So far, recommendations include a working farm (possibly for endangered species); organic and hydroponic gardens; an environmental research facility; and a boat moored on an adjacent canal to ferry students on study missions into the 1,000 miles of waterways in the adjacent San Juaquin river delta region. The district is also considering operating the site as a student-operated environmental conference center for use by local business and community groups.

The primary ingredient of the new Lincoln Plan is its focus on students. As the system develops, each student will be given the opportunity to develop their own personal education plan (PEP) in consultation with an adult mentor and an educational professional. As the twelve other sites expand to include more thematic opportunities, like health and fitness, performing arts, or business, students will have even more choices in their learning path. And because each site will be connected to a network of community resources, the learning process will also be integrated with everyday commerce and community affairs. In order to gather more information and ideas on available options, students have been conducting "treasure hunts" in the local community, documenting learning opportunities already available at local shopping centers, stores, museums, and community colleges. At the same time, another experimental educational program has taken root in a storefront "classroom" at a local strip shopping center. Called "Dimensions," the program's focus is on formerly disenfranchised students who are returning to the school system to give the new "user friendly" approach a try.

With its vision firmly outlined in the Lincoln Plan, the Lincoln Unified School District in Stockton, California is on the move. Through a cooperative planning process, the district's stakeholders are involved in expanding their notions of learning and community through a student-centered process of inquiry and exploration.

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